

Vol. II PATAGONIAN AND PAMPEAN HUNTERS—COOPER 130

On the occasion of sickness, the evil spirit was driven away by firing off guns and revolvers, by throwing lighted brands into the air, and by beating the backs of tules with lance shafts or bolts (Musters, 1871, p. 203; Lista, 1879 b, p. 74). 755

SHAMANISM

There were both male and female shamans. Transvestite shamans were reported about in the middle 19th century (Sánchez Labrador, 1886, p. 32), but appear later, in the early 19th (Conn, 1880, p. 118; D'Orbigny, 1826-47, 4:220). The ordinary curing procedure included sounding of drum and calabash (Sánchez Labrador, 1886, p. 127) or hide rattle (Conn, 1880, p. 118), and sucking out some small material object as the cause of the disease. The modern shamans described by Bergställe (1924, p. 123) used a hand-drum in her curing rites. If the patient died, the shaman was very apt to be killed by the injured relatives. 276 •

The arrow-swallowing trick, observed by the Magellan expedition in 1480 at Port San Julian (Pigafetta, 1896, 1:18; Oviedo, 1631-55, 2:10) and by the Sarmiento expedition in 1604 near Cape San Gregorio in the Strait of Magellan (Sarmiento, [1579], 1892 b, p. 200; cf. Hernández, [1690], 1890, p. 130), but not reported by any later observers, may have been from a shamanistic repertoire, although Pigafetta considered it a remedy for pain in the stomach. The performer, after removing the arrowhead, stuck the shaft down his throat to his stomach, and then withdrew it. 277

MYTHOLOGY

Our data on Tehuelche mythology and folklore are extremely meager. In the very brief cosmogonic note given us by Musters (1871, p. 179), the good spirit created the Indians and animals, and dispersed them from a place called "God's hill." In Bergställe's account (1924, pp. 129-130), Heller, son of the sun, who also was called by this name, was the one who created the Tehuelche and gave them their land of Patagonia, and it is to Heller that the Tehuelche go after death. In the short Heller cycle, as reported by Bergställe, occur the Achilles and the magic flight motifs. Lista (1879 b, pp. 74-76) reported a Tehuelche flood story. 773

LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

No weights or measures are reported. Smoke signaling was much used; Bergställe (1924, p. 19) lists four distinct conventional signals. According to Sánchez Labrador (1886, p. 32), it seems that the Tehuelche and Puelche, in contrast to the Araucanians, did not use verbal cursives, but in the 19th century the Tehuelche made some use of them. (Fitz-Roy, 1823, 2:144; Musters, 1871, pp. 141, 142; 278

Indians [of the Pampa] believe in two superior beings, the one good, the other evil.⁷⁸⁶ Seychu (see *supra*, p. 157) may have been a *Puelche* name for the deity or one of the deities (cf. Falkner, 1774, p. 114); Gualicho may also be a word of *Puelche* origin; Lehmann-Nitsche (1922, pp. 25, 26) considered that both words were from his *Hot* tongue; but the point is quite uncertain. With the meager evidence we have, all that one can do is to present the foregoing facts and let the reader draw his own conclusions.

At full moon, there was excessive rejoicing, and the moon was asked for strength (Sánchez Labrador, 1926, pp. 65-66).

ORIGIN

Here, too, it is impossible to say in how far as a rule the generalized statements in Sánchez Labrador and Falkner apply to the *Puelche*.⁷⁸⁷ Sánchez Labrador, however, does specifically (1926, p. 52) ascribe transvestite shamans to the *Puelche*—men who dressed like women, cooked and fetched water, and stayed with the women. Shamans were very much feared. They were called, according to D'Orbigny (1825-67, 2:170), *calmalche* (a name very similar to the name *camalache*, which Viedma [erroneously?] attributes to the evil spirit of the *Takuelche*; see *supra*, p. 158).

MYTHOLOGY

Available data are extremely meager. Sun was the elder brother, Moon the younger brother; Moon was not so intelligent as Sun (Lehmann-Nitsche, 1919 a). There was a tradition of a very high tide (Lehmann-Nitsche, 1919 b) and also of a flood. After the flood which covered all the earth except the Sierra de la Ventana, the peoples came out of caves in the mountains and the world was populated again (Sánchez Labrador, 1926, p. 66; cf. Vignati, 1928 b).

LANGUAGE AND WRITING

Sánchez Labrador (1926, p. 56) rather clearly implies that the *Puelche* used no herbal curatives. One can count up to 100,000 in the *Puelche* language, but all numbers from 99 up, including, of course, "100" and "1,000," are from *Quechua*.⁷⁸⁸

BIBLIOGRAPHY

For bibliographic references, see pages 126-128.

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thus to combine the marvels told them, or even to cap what they consider one legend with another; but there is no doubt that they do believe in a good Spirit, though they think he lives 'careless of mankind.' They have no idols or objects of worship, nor—if a year's experience can enable one to judge—do they observe any periodical religious festival, on which either the good or evil Spirit is adored. The mention of this by other travellers can only be explained by confused accounts which have attributed Araucanian customs to the totally distinct Patagonians. The belief which prompts all their religious acts is that in the existence of many active and malicious evil spirits or demons, of whom the principal one is always on the watch to cause mischief. To propitiate or drive away this spirit is the function of the wizard, or doctor, or medicine man, who combines the medical and magical arts, though not possessed of an exclusive faculty for either. All sacrifices of mares and horses, not at stated times, but as occasion requires, such as a birth, death, &c., are intended to propitiate the Gualichu. When a child hurts itself, the slaughter of mares seems to partake at once of the nature of a thank-offering that the hurt was no worse, and a propitiation to avert further harm.

In camp the Gualichu takes up his position outside the back of the toldo, watching for an opportunity to molest the inmates, and is supposed to be kept quiet by the spells of the doctor, who is not only gifted with the power of laying the devil, but can even detect him by sight. I inquired of one of the doctors what he was like, but received an evasive answer; on which I informed him that my devil took all sorts of shapes—sometimes appearing as a guanaco, ostrich, puma, skunk, or vulture, at which the medical man was intensely amused. This household devil is, as far as I could ascertain, supposed to enter into the different parts of the bodies of people, and cause sickness which the doctor is appealed to to cure. The treatment in the case of headache, for instance, is very simple: the doctor takes the patient's head

- 756 between his knees, and performing a short ceremony of incantation, shouts in his ear, exhorting the devil to come out. Mr. Clarke, when travelling with the Indians south of Santa Cruz, was treated in this fashion when suffering from feverish headache, and said that at the time it relieved him.
- 775 Beside this Gualichu, there are many others which
788 are supposed to inhabit subterranean dwellings, underneath certain woods and rivers and peculiarly-shaped rocks. I was very much surprised at seeing the Indians salute these objects by placing the hand to the head and muttering an incantation; and for a long time held to the belief that they were only expressing admiration for the Creator's handiwork; but subsequently I learned that they sought thus to conciliate the spirits of these places, reputed to be the spirits of deceased members of the faculty. These devils' powers, however, are confined to the districts contiguous to their habitations.
- 789 On one occasion, a horse about to run a match was taken
776 up to a neighbouring hill before daylight by the owner, and some secret ceremony was performed by the wizard. Previous to the race the owner (Wáki) came to me and advised me to put my stakes on his horse, as he had been made safe to win by mysterious incantations which had secured the favour of the local Gualichu; and, strange to say, the horse, which by his appearance was much inferior to the other, did win, thereby establishing a reputation for the wizard and the Gualichu.
- 776 I remember on one occasion when riding with Hinchel we came in sight of a peculiarly-pointed rock, which he saluted. I did the same, at which he appeared much pleased; and on our subsequently arriving at a salina, where we found good salt, much needed at the time, he explained to me that the spirit of the place had led us in that direction. In the meeting of Indians the devils are supposed to be driven away by the horsemen chasing at full speed round and round, and firing off their guns.

MANNERS AND CUSTOMS OF THE TEHUELCHES. 191

The office of wizard is not hereditary ; indeed those I met ⁷⁵⁶ with were unmarried. A boy or a girl, if what we should ⁷⁹¹ call odd, as in the case of Cayuka's daughter, an old-fashioned and eccentric girl of thirteen, is considered to be marked out as a wizard ; but the functions, so far as directing ceremonies, are sometimes performed by an ordinary member of the party. The stock in trade of the regular wizard consists ^[778] of a few fetishes, or charms, carried in a bag, carefully concealed from public gaze, and exhibited to his colleagues alone. In addition to these, they seem to possess a real knowledge of simples, although this is not confined to them. Their professional operations are never accompanied by epileptic seizures and real or simulated convulsions. They, of course, are expected to prognosticate the success or failure of undertakings, and the issue of sickness, and foretell the future generally ; and their position in this respect is a dangerous one, as a failure of their predictions is frequently punished with death ; but, to make up for this risk, they are universally received with honour and hospitably entertained, and are usually enriched by the accumulation of presents. The power of witchcraft is by no means believed to be con- ⁷⁵⁴ fined to them ; any person may be suspected of this crime, and it is not an uncommon occurrence for people when dying to lay their death to the charge of some person by name. All the missionaries' instructions did not prevent Casimiro, after the death of either his mother or one of his wives, from sending an agent to kill a woman who, as the deceased averred, had bewitched her. Certain signs and ⁷⁸⁷ omens are superstitiously regarded ; one particularly dreaded ⁸²⁵ is the cry of the nightjar, common on the slopes of the Cordillera, which, if uttered over a camp or toldo, betokens sickness or death to some of the inmates. They hold this bird in great veneration, and object to its being injured in any manner. Another animal supposed to be possessed of magical powers is a flat toad-like lizard, which is believed to lame horses by mysterious agency, and is killed whenever met with.

chu", is supposed continually to lurk outside and at the back of the toldo, watching for an opportunity to do harm to the inhabitants, and is only prevented from causing continual annoyance by the spells of the doctors, which latter are not only supposed to be gifted with the power of laying the devil, but also affirm that they can see him. On an occasion of sickness it is a common custom with these and other Indians to try and drive away the evil spirit by firing off guns and revolvers, throwing lighted brands into the air, and beating the backs of the toldos with lance shafts or bolas. Besides this particular household devil, if I may be allowed the expression, there are many others who live in caverns under particular rocks and rivers; these are supposed to be the spirits of departed members of the medical profession. Their power was, as far as I could ascertain, confined to the districts contiguous to their habitations. [53]

These Indians have also a custom of saluting the new moon, putting their heads and murmuring an incantation. They also salute in the same manner the spirits of the rocks and rivers. I at first was of opinion that they merely saluted these objects as specimens of the Creator's handiwork, but at last was inclined to think that their devotions were directed to propitiate the tutelary demons presiding over them. They have many signs and omens; one peculiar one is the cry of the night-jar, which, if uttered over a camp or toldo, betokens sickness to some of the inmates. They also object strongly to this bird being injured in any way. Another animal looked upon as having powers of witchcraft is a flat, toad-like lizard, common on the slopes of the Cordillera. Its power is confined chiefly to laming horses, and it is killed whenever met with. When about to smoke, the Indians invariably puff a portion to each cardinal point, muttering an incantation; they then lie prone on the ground, and inhale several puffs, which produces a state of torpor or insensibility, lasting perhaps one or two minutes, when they take a drink of water and recover their senses. Sometimes the intoxication is accompanied with convulsions. This intoxication is not confined to the Indians, I myself having frequently, after inhaling tobacco smoke, experienced the same results. 782

The position of wizard or doctor is not a very desirable one, as in the event of his prognosticating a success in a war expedition, or cessation in sickness, or any other event which is not realised, the chief will not unfrequently have him killed. Wizards are chosen not by hereditary descent, but by peculiarities exhibited in their youth. Women are allowed to become doctors, but such are rare. Witchcraft, however, is not confined to these wizards, and sometimes a dying man will state that so and so has caused his death by magic, in which case the person accused, 791 756 ● 754

The marriage ceremony, once the woman's price has been fixed 585 and paid, is limited to the father's taking her to the groom's tent, unless she herself goes off to the groom unattended, a thing which is not at all reprehensible. The groom then has a mare or two slaughtered, according to his means, and invites the bride's and his own male and female relatives and friends to eat the meat which, once done, the marriage ceremony is over.

Both the men and the women are very loving and devoted to their 854 children, whom, as soon as they are born, they bind about with many soft and pliable leather bands which they have in readiness. The babies are bound for over a month to a board made of many small sticks which are tied together and covered with hide. The Indians say that they grow up 142 straight in this way, and the fact is that both the men and the women are 516 all very straight and well built, and none are ever seen whose shoulders are hunched. Once the babies are taken out of their bindings the mothers usually carry them about with them on their backs, the baby's head issuing from the same opening in the garment as the mother's. When on the march they make a sort of cradle out of hide and sticks, rounded over and sealed on all sides except for openings for the head and feet, which they line and embellish with flannel, cloth or anything they may have, and ornament with beads, bells, etc., as they may be able to, and they secure them on the horse's rump behind the mother. Children are never seen to weep amongst these people, unless they receive a blow or fall.

Their religion is limited to a sort of belief in two powers, one 776 benign, which has jurisdiction only over the heavens and is independent 778 from and without power on the earth and its inhabitants, of whom they [771] take little notice; the other power is both benign and stern, and governs the earth, directing, chastening and rewarding its inhabitants. This power they worship in any guise in which they may represent it, or in the shape of some object found on the beach washed up from a shipwreck, such as masks from a ship's prow or fashion pieces from the stern, these being the preferred representations for their worship since they suppose them to have appeared by enchantment. This deity is called the Camalásque, which can be rendered as "powerful and valiant" [75]. Each person who has one of the figures defends it and believes that his is the true deity and those belonging to other Indians are false ones; yet disputes never flare up or get out of hand because they feel that the deity will itself bring down vengeance upon those who offend it. They believe that sickness and death are the 753 god's retribution, unless they occur in old age, in which case they are 76 attributed to natural causes. These images are kept in the tents, completely wrapped up in skins, woolen cloth, flannel or linen, as each is [756]

able, and it is never uncovered for anyone unless by order of the pseudo⁷⁵⁶
 holy man or witch doctor, who may be either a man or a woman. This⁷⁷⁶
 person ordinarily has to practice his art daily, chanting to the deity to the⁷⁷⁸
 accompaniment of two gourds filled with pebbles -- a type of music which⁵³⁴
 is as unpleasant as is his own voice. In this manner the witch doctor makes⁷⁸¹
 petitions to the deity to the effect that the group's enemies may sicken or
 die. This often redounds in the witch doctor's undoing for should his in-
 cantations be followed by some plague among the enemy, or some chief
 or important person die amongst them, then the enemy group will try every
 means to capture the witch doctor and make a devil's martyr of him. The
 witch doctors must also chant to the deity in intercession for the sick in⁷⁵⁵
 their own camp in order to overrule the witch doctors among their enemies.
 If the sick person is not brought back to health the sick one's friends often
 will give the witch doctor his just deserts, at least by depriving him of his
 occupation and treating him as of no repute in the future; if the wife or
 son of a chief should die the witch doctor will often pay for his unsuccessful
 cure with his life. The witch doctor's curative efforts are limited to chant-
 ing, no other medicines being used in the curing of sickness. And so these⁷⁵⁶
 singing doctors encounter many hardships in their lives, there being but few
 who die of natural causes, but nevertheless there are always many eager for
 the job because they can have a free hand with the Indians' wives if the⁵³⁷
 latter are willing, or, if the witch doctor be a woman, she can have re-
 lations with the men. There are almost as many witch doctors as there are
 families because as a rule the head of every household has an idol of his⁷⁷⁸
 own in his tent, and if the camp is made up of four, five or more families,
 there are an equal number of witch doctors or pseudo holy men -- let it be⁵⁹²
 remembered that amongst the Indians a family is not composed only of man,
 wife and children, but also of all of the relatives of the husband who is the
 family head, and who is therefore a sort of subaltern chief under the one who
 has general overlordship and property rights to the land.

When someone in the family becomes sick the family witch doctor⁷⁵⁵
 comes to chant in the person's very ear, in such loud and harsh tones that
 the sounds alone might be enough to bring about his death. If the patient
 gets worse [?] the witch doctor invites the participation of others of his
 profession and all the old women, in order to help him in his chanting;
 should the patient die no one other than the original witch doctor is held
 responsible. Once the sick person is completely prostrated, if she be a virgin
 and young, a tent of ponchos is made for her at some little distance from
 the camp. She is put into it and there the chanting becomes louder because

he ease the soul's distress somewhat until the decreed time comes around. They are so superstitious in this matter that some are persuaded that it is desirable to put a little food and valuables in the grave so that the souls of the deceased may eat and entertain themselves; others think that this is fruitless, believing that the idol will supply them with all that is necessary. This matter is ordered in each [78] family according to the opinion of the imposter witch doctor, who deceives himself and hoodwinks the others as he pleases, no notice being taken of his inconsistencies, even when his thoughts and his commands are seen to be continually at variance. These liars make the others believe that the idol makes signs with its hands, and that it speaks, and then they repeat what they say they have heard the idol say, before the people are present at the time when the witch doctor unwraps the idol, and they see with their own eyes that it is a lie, if the witch doctor says that it has spoken or gesticulated, that is enough for them to believe the thing blindly. 775 782 ●

They are of the opinion that nothing they can do can offend the deity they worship in any way, and so they believe that the adversities and punishments which he sends them are not because they have deserved them because of their transgressions, but because the idol just gets it into its head to treat them badly. Thus the graciousness of this power consists in having good horses, health and peace, in finding plentiful game, and in the faithfulness of their neighbors. 776 778

The number of Indians who are here settled is about 4,000 persons. They occupy the territory on the coast which has already been indicated. They cannot leave this region because they are hemmed in on the east by the sea, on the north by the Rio Negro and the Pampas Indians of Buenos Aires, and on the west and south by the mountain chain which it is impossible to cross owing to its height and because it is covered with snow the year round. So forbidding are these mountains that they are to all intents uninhabited, even by birds. 131

In all this land there is absolutely no lumber for construction purposes, but there is an abundance of firewood on all hands, good for burning, and the greater part of the ground is covered with sabine, torbisco, thyme and gomieles. All the land is rugged and cut up into hills, gullies and valleys. One of these latter is to be found twenty leagues away from San Julian, and is a very pleasant place which the Indians call Oenna. There are in it innumerable springs with good water. In most of the gullies and valleys springs are to be met with at a distance of one, two, three or four leagues from the shore. It is improbable that these parts 137 131 133 312 320

202

HISTORY OF THE ABIPONES.

A
123 Former customs, raved when they found their
197 medicines laughed at, and the fountain of their
177 gains dried up. The jugglers, who had sucked
the bodies, and drained the property of the
sick, were despised by their countrymen as a
set of worthless drones.

T
753 The Patagonians, and other southern savages,
756 think the body of a sick person to be possessed
of an evil demon. Their physicians carry about
T
[534] drums, with horrible forms depicted on them,
which they strike by the sick man's bed, either
to consult the demon concerning the nature of
the disease, or to drive it from the body of their
patient. If any one dies of a disease, the rela-
tions persecute the physician most terribly, as
the author of his death. If a Cacique dies, they
T
[66] put all the physicians to death, that they may
not fly elsewhere. Actuated by an irrational
kind of pity, they bury the dying before they
T
[763] expire. Father Strobl pulled one man alive
from the grave. The Guaycurús call their phy-
sicians Nigienigis. A gourd filled with hard

M
756 seeds, and a fan of dusky emu feathers are their
chief insignia, and medical instruments, which
they always carry in their hands that they may
be known. I must not omit to speak of the phy-
sicians of the Chiquitos. A juggler physician,
C
756 when he goes to visit the sick, fills his belly
with the most exquisite dainties, chickens, hens;